

Message Text

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43

ACTION TRSE-00

INFO OCT-01 NEA-09 ISO-00 EB-07 SY-04 USSS-00 PRS-01 SS-15

NSC-05 /042 W

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P 281231Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2301

C O N F I D E N T I A L COLOMBO 0596

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: OVIP

SUBJ: RECOMMENDATION SECRETARY SIMONS VISIT SRI LANKA

REF: STATE 44081

1. IN VIEW SECRETARY SIMON'S PROPOSED VISIT TO
NEARBY MADRAS, WE STRONGLY URGE THAT SECRETARY ALSO
VISIT SRI LANKA.

2. SRI LANKA IS ONLY COUNTRY IN SOUTH ASIA WHICH
HAS NOT BEEN VISITED BY ANY REPEAT ANY HIGH-LEVEL
OFFICIAL DURING EITHER FORD OR NIXON ADMINISTRATIONS.
VISIT BY SECRETARY SIMON WOULD PROVIDE VALUABLE
DEMONSTRATIOH OF IMPORTANCE US ATTACHES TO ITS
RELATIONS WITH SRI LANKA. IT WOULD ALSO BE FAVORABLY
RECEIVED BY GSL WHICH IS SEEKING TO MAINTAIN ITS NON-ALIGNED
STANCE AND PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE WOULD WELCOME OPPORTUNITY
TO HEAR FIRST-HAND, SECRETARY SIMON'S VIEWS ON IMPORTANT
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, INCLUDING ENERGY AND RELATED FIELDS.

SINCE PRIME
MINISTER HAS TRAVELED
EXTENSIVELY IN RECENT MONTHS, INCLUDING TRIPS TO RUSSIA AND
EASTERN EUROPE,
SECRETARY'S VISIT HERE
WOULD ADD USEFUL US PERSPECTIVE TO HER MEET-
INGS WITH OTHER FOREIGN LEADERS.

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3. SECRETARY'S CALLS IN SRI LANKA MIGHT BE CONFINED TO PRIME MINISTER BANDARANAIKE, WHO HOSTS NON-ALIGNED SUMMIT NEXT YEAR, AND FINANCE MINISTER PERERA WHO HUI INFLUENTIAL POSITION AS CHAIRMAN OF GROUP OF 24. GSL WOULD PROBABLY WANT TO HOST SOCIAL EVENT IN SECRETARY'S HONOR. IF SECRETARY COULD REMAIN SRI LANKA OVERNIGHT, THIS WOULD PROVIDE ADDITIONAL TIME FOR TRIP OUTSIDE OF COLOMBO TO OTHER PARTS THIS BEAUTIFUL ISLAND, POSSIBLY INCLUDING TRIP TO ANCIENT HILL CAPITAL OF KANDY. BELIEVE WE CAN ALSO COME UP WITH SOME ANTIQUE RIFLES.

4. ATMOSPHERE OF SECRETARY'S VISIT WOULD BE PARTICULARLY FAVORABLE AGAINST BACKGROUND RECENT US ANNOUNCEMENT OF DEVELOPMENT LOAN AND 100,000 TONS OF PL 480 WHEAT FLOUR. THIS RECENT ASSISTANCE WILL ALSO HELP INSURE THAT NO SIGNIFICANT ADDITIONAL EXPECTATIONS WILL BE STIMULATED BY SECRETARY'S VISIT.

5. WOULD APPRECIATE EARLIEST INDICATION DSOM DEPART-
MENT AS TO WHETHER STOP IN SRI LANKA IS FEASIBLE.
VAN HOLLEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: INSTRUCTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975COLOMB00596
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750071-0111
From: COLOMBO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975024/aaaaacyh.tel
Line Count: 83
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION TRSE
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 44081
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <24 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: RECOMMENDATION SECRETARY SIMONS VISIT SRI LANKA
TAGS: OVIP, US, CE, (SIMON, WILLIAM E)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006